



Solicitation Information
21 Nov 03

LOI # B03148

TITLE: Focus Groups – Forest Resource Plan

Submission Deadline: 8 Dec 03 @ 2:00 PM

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at questions@purchasing.state.ri.us no later than **1 Dec 03 at 12:00 Noon (ET)** . Send questions in a Microsoft Word attachment. Please reference the RFP / LOI # on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

SURETY REQUIRED: No

BOND REQUIRED: No

Jerome D. Moynihan, C.P.M., CPPO
Administrator of Purchasing Systems

Vendors must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at
www.purchasing.state.ri.us.

NOTE TO VENDORS:

Offers received without the entire completed three-page RIVP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification.

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM

The Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) is preparing an update of the RI Forest Resource Plan, which assesses current conditions and sets priorities for the management of Rhode Island's forest resources. RIDEM seeks to use focus groups to gain an understanding of key issues and use this information to develop specific goals and policies to address these issues.

This solicitation, and subsequent contract award, is governed by the State's General Conditions of Purchase, available at www.purchasing.state.ri.us

INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO OFFERORS:

- **Potential offerors are advised to review all sections of this Request carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.**
- **Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this Request will be rejected as being non-responsive.**
- **All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Request or to provide oral or written clarification of its content shall be borne by the offeror. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.**
- **Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.**
- **All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.**
- **Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not present in the Division of Purchases at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and will not be considered. PROPOSALS FAXED TO THE DIVISION OF PURCHASES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**
- **It is intended that an award pursuant to this Request will be made to a prime contractor, who will assume responsibility for all aspects of the work. Joint venture and cooperative proposals will not be considered, but subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the offeror's proposal, and that the subcontractor(s) proposed to be used are identified in the proposal.**
- **In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation or a corporation without a Rhode Island business address shall have the right to transact business in the state until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401 222-3040). This is a requirement only of the successful bidder.**
- **Bidders are advised that all materials submitted to the State of Rhode Island for consideration in response to this Request for Proposals will be considered to be public**

records, as defined in Title 38 Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, without exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request once an award has been made.

Notice

There may be additional agenda to this bid/RFP at any time before the opening date and time.

The Division of purchases will not be notifying by mail of any such addenda.

It is the vendor's responsibility to check and download any and all addenda.

An addendum to a bid/RFP is listed as the bid number with an "A" followed by the number of the addendum; for example 3025A1 indicates addendum #1 has been issued for bid 3025. 3025A2 indicates addendum #2 has been issued.

You must click on all of these listings to get the complete package.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

TITLE: CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS TO COLLECT PUBLIC INPUT FOR THE RHODE ISLAND FOREST RESOURCE PLAN

REPORTS TO: CHIEF, DEM, DIVISION OF FOREST ENVIRONMENT.

FUNDING: Approximately \$11,500 will be made available through this LOI request for this project. Additional funding will not be available. Office expenses, materials, supplies and all other costs associated with performing the tasks described in this LOI request to be included in bid.

ORGANIZATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Must be a locally based market research firm with expertise in the planning and facilitation of focus groups for collecting public opinion information. Must demonstrate an extensive understanding in the use of focus groups for data collection as it relates to this project.

Organizations who represent interests of minorities or individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

SCOPE OF WORK

Background and Functions

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management is charged with working to preserve, protect, and restore Rhode Island's Environment. Within the Department, the Division of Forest Environment is responsible for the state's forest resources. The Division, in

cooperation with Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning and other organizations, is updating the State's Forest Resource Guide Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to inventory and assess the state's forest resources, identify key planning issues, develop specific goals and policies, make specific recommendations to improve forest resource management, and develop a work program for implementation of the Plan. As part of this process, focus groups are needed to gather input from affected parties about key issues impacting the forests of Rhode Island. Respondents to this LOI will be responsible for conducting focus groups of five (5) key groups of stakeholders to collect information and report on the results as part of this effort.

The successful respondent organization will work in partnership with DEM to insure that the research and information generated by the focus groups is available to a broad range of stakeholders including state and local government leaders, policy makers, environmental organizations, community organizations, academic institutions and others.

The offeror will highlight key data and policy issues and provide other pertinent information necessary to plan and implement the focus groups. The successful respondent organization will recruit participants, conduct the focus groups, analyze the data, and report findings to the State Forestry Planning Committee. A final written report will be developed to summarize the process and results of the focus groups.

Tasks

- Meet with DEM staff to discuss goals, recruitment, and questions to pose to focus group participants, and the work plan for the project.
- Recruit participants for five (5) public stakeholder focus groups including forest landowners, recreational users, forest industry, environmental organizations, and resource professionals. Each group will consist of eight to twelve participants.
- Conduct five (5) focus groups.
- Analyze the data and report the findings of the focus groups.

Time Frame

Tasks as described above must be completed and accepted by the Forest Resource Plan Steering Committee by February 27, 2004.

CONDITIONS:

Awards resulting from this Request will be subject to the State's general Conditions of Purchase, which is available from the Internet at <http://www.purchasing.state.ri.us>.

Interested individuals and organizations should submit a Letter of Interest that includes:

- Description of the Offeror's background and experience with similar projects, including but not limited to focus groups;
- Schedule of work and timetable necessary to complete the tasks and deliverables described in this LOI;

- Listing of similar projects that demonstrate the capacity to meet the unique needs of this LOI request; and
- A cost proposal within the above specified parameters

Tasks described in the Scope of Work must be completed and accepted by the Forest Resource Plan Steering Committee by February 27, 2004.

Three copies of the final report to be delivered to DEM (in hard copy and electronic media) upon completion.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

- 10% After meeting with DEM staff to discuss goals, recruitment, questions to pose to focus group participants, and the work plan for the project.
- 25% After conducting five (5) focus groups.
- 35% After data is analyzed and findings reported.
- 30% After final approval of the report.

BIDDERS QUESTIONS:

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at questions@purchasing.state.ri.us no later than **1 Dec 03 at 12:00 Noon (ET)**. Please reference the RFP / LOI # on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information. . If technical assistance is required to download, call the Help Desk at (401) 222-2142, ext. 134.

RESPONSES:

Responses must be received in the Division of Purchases on or before 8 Decd 03 @ 2:00 PM

Responses (an original plus five (5) copies) should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked LOI # B03148: Focus Groups - Forest Resource Plan"

By Courier:

**RI Dept. of Administration
Division of Purchases, 2nd floor
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5855**

By Mail:

**R.I. Department of Administration
Division of Purchases
P.O. Box 6528
Providence, RI 02940-6528**

NOTE: Proposals received after the above-referenced due date and time will not be considered. Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not presented in the Division of Purchases by the scheduled due date and time will be determined to be late and will not be considered. For the purpose of this solicitation, the official time clock is located at the Reception Desk of the Division of Purchases.

Responses must include the following:

- 1. A completed and signed *three-page* RI Vendor Information Program (RIVIP) generated bidder certification cover form (downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at <http://www.purchases.state.ri.us>).**
- 2. A statement of experience describing the Vendors background, qualifications, and experience with and for similar projects, and all information described earlier in this solicitation.**
- 3. A Cost Proposal providing a description of staffing and costs related to the scope of services (i.e.-development, design and printing of materials; costs related to conferences and public meetings, etc.)**
- 4. A completed and signed W – 9 (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification form). This form is downloadable from the Division of Purchases Internet home page. Call the Help Desk (401 222-2142, ext 134) if assistance is needed.**

Consultant Selection Criteria

TECHNICAL REVIEW/EVALUATION:

Evaluation of the responses will be based on evidence of the following criteria. The Technical Review Team may be interested in interviewing finalists before final selection.

- 1. Competence to perform the desired services by virtue of the experience and qualifications of the applicant in providing similar services (30 points);**
- 2. Compatibility of the offerer's expertise and the project's goals and objectives (20 points);**
- 3. Demonstrated capacity and ability to meet deadlines, interact with various groups and organizations, and a sound understanding of the role of focus groups in the development of the state's Forest Resource Plan (30 points);**
- 4. Capable of meeting February 27, 2004 deadline. (10 points); and**
- 5. Cost – Budget is compatible with the services proposed (10 points)**

Technical proposals that fail to attain a minimum aggregate score of 70 points, out of a possible 100, shall be disqualified from further consideration.

Notwithstanding the above, the State reserves the right not to award this contract or to award on the basis of cost alone, to accept or reject any or all proposals, and to award in its best interest.

Proposals found to be technically or substantially non-responsive at any point in the evaluation process will be rejected and not considered further. The State reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted and to waive any informalities in any vendor's proposal.

The Technical Review Sub-Committee will present written findings, including the results of all evaluations, to the State's Architect/Engineer and Consultant Services Selection Committee, which may recommend three finalists to the Director of the Department of Administration, who will make the final selection for this requirement.